

Mary Calhoun

Good afternoon and thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on public safety in DC.

My name is Mary Calhoun. I live in ward 4 and teach in ward 5 at the same school my own children attend. Today I am here to tell you about a disturbing, recent incident I witnessed involving Metropolitan police officers cooperating with federal agents.

One September day after Trump's federal emergency had long ended, school had just finished and I had picked up my own kids from their classes. We were just passing time on the playground when we heard that law enforcement officers were on the other side of the school, likely arresting someone for immigration-related reasons. Out of concern, I approached the scene while video recording. When I arrived, I saw several officers from multiple agencies working together – FBI, HSI, MPD and some others too far away for me to read their jackets. They and several police cars were surrounding two men who were handcuffed and seated in the street.

As I approached from a distance, one MPD officer yelled to me that simply by being present and “distracting” him, I was “interfering” with the scene. He moved toward me aggressively and demanded that I move to a specific location, otherwise he would arrest me.

Although I knew I was doing nothing unlawful and was within my rights to observe and record a police encounter in a public space, I felt scared for my own safety. The officer used his authority to intimidate me and anyone nearby from witnessing the arrest.

In that moment, I was scared for my own safety, that of my family, and that of the families of children at my school. We saw MPD officers hand one of the arrested men to a masked federal agent, who put the man in an unmarked car. They refused to answer questions of why the men were arrested or where they were being taken.

The fear we all felt in that moment hasn't left any of us.

MPD and local law enforcement are not meeting the requirements of the DC Human Rights Act. DC must revisit and fully enforce Sanctuary City Status. Local law enforcement cooperation with federal agents must end. No one is safe when our local police help kidnap our community members.

Les Poling

The "incarcerate first, ask questions later" approach that the Council has adopted towards public safety in recent years - led by Councilmember Pinto - swung the door wide open for the current public safety crisis that DC faces *every day* in the form of federal officers and troops on our streets. The same councilmembers who purport to oppose the infringement on DC's autonomy supplied this administration with excuses to do exactly that with legislation like PEACE DC, a horrendous bill that criminalizes DC youth in the name of safety.

Alternative strategies across the country, including some employed less than an hour away in Baltimore, show that the only real path to public safety is to invest in our communities, our young people, our communities' health. We need real public services, not more criminalization.

Angela Tyler-Williams

Good afternoon, my name is Rev. Angela Tyler-Williams, I am a resident of Ward 1 in Columbia Heights. I worship at St. Columba's Episcopal Church in Ward 3, and I am a clergy member of Washington Interfaith Network. I'm testifying on public safety because, as a Christian, my faith compels me to love my neighbor as myself, and I have not seen our city loving our neighbors and residents well.

On Friday, September 5 at 10:30pm, I was walking down 14th St. NW when I saw 6 cars - 2 MPD, 1 Secret Service, and 3 unmarked cars descended on a small intersection at Fairmont St NW. What in the world was happening to warrant this response?! I took out my phone to start recording, and watched as all these officers uniformed and not stumbled over themselves to back out of a small intersection without hitting each other because 6 cars in that intersection is completely absurd.

After they sped away, I walked up to my neighbors, a group of Black young adults gathered on the sidewalk having a cookout. I introduced myself and asked if everyone was ok. My neighbors told me that yes they were fine, but they knew this group would be back in an hour to harass them again. Then, they invited me to the cookout and offered me a hotdog. My neighbors loved me as they love themselves.

Thankfully this encounter ended without a detention, arrest, or shooting, but we have heard so many other stories today with a tragically different outcome.

Loving our neighbors as ourselves means wanting safety, health, and thriving for all residents of this city, not just the wealthy, white ones.

I want dignity for our unhoused neighbors, migrant neighbors, and Black youth.

If you want to serve this city, you must serve every person, every resident, every neighbor in this city.

End the collaboration between MPD and ICE. Repeal Chief's order 25-005.

We still have home rule. Use your power to hold a hearing to account for the abuse, law breaking, and behavior of both MPD and federal agencies.

Address public safety at the root cause level, not through permanent curfews that criminalize our Black and brown youth neighbors.

We need homes not handcuffs.

We need communities not curfews.

We need support not surveillance.

We need accountability not anonymity.

We need oversight not impunity.

That is how this city will love all our neighbors as ourselves.

Thank you.

Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

Thursday December 4, 2025

Testimony: Bianca Palmisano, RN, MSN

Dear Councilmember Pinto and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Bianca Palmisano, I am a nurse and a Ward 1 resident here to testify about the urgent human rights crisis happening in DC. I want to draw attention to MPD's continued collaboration with federal immigration and customs enforcement, and the impact this unsanctioned work is having on my community.

I have spent the majority of my career in DC serving people directly threatened by ICE's presence: Latine people and recent immigrants, unhoused people, and people generally at the economic margins.

ICE agents are a frequent presence in my home neighborhood of Columbia Heights. They have set up checkpoints on adjacent streets, harassed my patients, and kidnapped my neighbors, all with the support and encouragement of the Metropolitan Police Department. The Bondi order requesting MPD assistance with immigration enforcement expired on September 10th, but Mayor Bowser chose to continue to conduct joint enforcement. My patients and clients are afraid to take their kids to school, to attend doctor appointments, and to go to the grocery store, knowing that an ICE agent or DC police officer may decide they look like a target today.

There is simply no reason for this ongoing collaborative arrangement between ICE and DC agencies. Over 80% of DC residents oppose the presence of federal forces in DC. We know that we are perfectly capable of keeping our own city safe, and that our immigrant neighbors are not the problem.

I am calling on you, Councilmember Pinto, and on the committee as a whole to end MPD-ICE collaboration including police joint traffic and street enforcement with federal immigration agents. I also call on you to rescind the Chief of Police's order (Executive Order No. 25-005) permitting data investigation for ICE, transporting ICE agents, and transporting individuals for release to ICE. We do not need to invite ICE's incursion into our communities. We do not need to be their chauffeurs, their researchers, or their rental wardens. We are safer without ICE. Lastly, and I cannot stress this enough, I am desperate for this committee to realize that true safety comes from taking care of people's basic needs, not threatening, attacking, and incarcerating them. I charge that if you truly care about keeping DC safe, you would redirect the excessive financial resources we invest in punitive law enforcement toward housing, healthcare coverage, food subsidies, and public

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transit infrastructure, all critical services that became “tough choices” during budget cuts. When you invest in the services residents need instead of brutalizing them, you’ll see that our community gets safer.



DC Jobs With Justice
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1640 Columbia Rd. NW
Washington, DC 20009

**Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
Public Safety in DC
December 2, 2025
Elizabeth Falcon
Executive Director, DC Jobs with Justice**

Thank you Councilmember Pinto for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Elizabeth Falcon and I am the Executive Director of DC Jobs With Justice. DC Jobs With Justice has a long history of fighting for an inclusive and welcoming District including the passage and protection of the Sanctuary Values Act, the implementation of special purpose drivers licences, and high quality language access laws. Additionally, we conduct know-your-rights trainings for District residents to inform people of their rights at work and tenant rights. Migrants have always been at higher risk of wage theft or illegal housing conditions, but now they face very real danger of being kidnapped at their workplace and confined indefinitely away from their families.

These risks have been exacerbated by ongoing collaboration between local and federal law enforcement agencies. District residents are increasingly afraid to leave their homes, access basic services, and engage with local government to resolve problems because they have seen ICE, HSI, or other federal forces working in collaboration. Why would you call MPD to protect yourself from domestic violence or if you witness a crime if it means that you or your family member could be removed from the community altogether?

Losing an income stream often means a family's loss of housing, food, or other necessities. It's just not an option for most people. And that extends to the work we do at DC Jobs with Justice: people are afraid to call *anyone* in the government—including wage-hour enforcement—when they experience illegal treatment. This collaboration has led to widespread distrust in D.C. government, and it will take a long time to earn that back.

Additionally, I am a Ward 4 resident. My daughter is a student at a school that is overwhelmingly made up of immigrant families - a reflection of my Brightwood neighborhood. My family is personally affected by the fear that pervades our neighborhood. My dear friend Rosa no longer takes her kids to the playground, including a rowdy 4 year old son. Her husband quit his job because his employer started stealing his wages with perceived immunity.

I see an outpouring of support from neighbors. They are raising thousands of dollars in days for my neighbor Jose, and celebrated when was returned to his family six weeks later: the day before Thanksgiving. They walk and drive each others kids to school and maintain a daily stake out. They distribute food and up to date information.

DC government has done much less than my individual neighbors to create a sense of care and protection for our neighbors.

We at DC JWWJ echo others' demands for this collaboration to end. In particular, DC government must act in the interest of our interests and enforcement of our laws:



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End MPD-ICE collaboration including police joint traffic and street enforcement with federal immigration agents: the Bondi order requesting MPD assistance with immigration enforcement expired after September 10, but the Mayor chooses to continue to conduct joint enforcement. This INCLUDES the aggressive collaboration between federal agencies and Park Police who have had traumatic consequences among our unhoused folks, who are already being targeted by lack of funding in our budget.

Rescind the Chief of Police's order (Executive Order No. 25-005) permitting data investigation for ICE, transporting ICE agents, and transporting individuals for release to ICE.

Request and make public all ICE requests to local agencies for assistance and information, and any action taken by local agencies in response: this data must be kept by MPD and all DC agencies under the SVA.

Issue DCPS guidance on supporting students and families regardless of immigration status around school drop-off and pick-up, and ensure all school leaders disseminate Know Your Rights information and training to staff, students, and families.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the profound loss of trust this collaboration has created with at-risk members of our community. DC will need to do more than just end the status quo: local government will have to proactively work to rebuild the relationship between the District government and its people. This will not happen quickly, but must begin today: our future as a city, and eventual state, depend on it.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

Sabrina Beattie-Romero

Individual Testimony

Sabrina Beattie-Romero

Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Good morning all, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Sabrina Beattie-Romero. I am a teacher in the city, but I'm here today in a personal capacity, as a concerned resident.

I have lived and worked in DC for 11 years, and I have never felt unsafe in my daily life here. That is, until August of this year when the federal occupation has brought psychological terror to our city and its residents. I have been a direct witness of how MPD has worked directly with federal immigration enforcement to rip families apart. I am here to call on the Committee to end this brutal cooperation that has fundamentally traumatized too many people in this city. I am a mandated reporter, and I am here to report that in our city everyday, masked men from the government are kidnapping fathers and leaving DC children vulnerable.

As an ally and witness to our immigrant families in DC that have been targeted, it is important for me that you all hear directly from residents that are not able to speak for themselves. I will be sharing two stories today.

Story 1: "At the end of August of this year, I was getting ready to leave for church, and knew my husband was waiting outside for me

by the car. I have five small children, and as many parents know, it takes a while to get everyone ready and out the door. When I stepped out of my apartment building, I saw that my husband's car window had been broken, and he was being hauled away by masked men. I had to shield my children from this scene, and they are forever traumatized by this experience. My husband has no criminal record, and he is still in detention 5 months later. We relied on him financially and emotionally and now my 5 children, who are all US citizens, may be evicted from the only home they know. We are all suffering, and we don't know what to do."

Story 2: "It was October 17th. My husband left for work like every day, and out of nowhere, ICE surrounded his van and told him to get out. Then they handcuffed him and took him away and practically forced him to sign for his deportation. They didn't give my husband any options, and blocked his exits. It's really difficult because ICE agents don't care about anything. My husband told them he has two small children. He begged the ICE agents not to deport him, but they said that didn't matter to them. It's very sad; the children keep asking about their father, and I don't know how to explain it to them because they're still little and don't understand what's happening. And now I still don't know what to do."

These stories are only two of the hundreds of people who have been impacted. What I hope the DC Council takes away from these stories is that you all have a direct responsibility to address the harms caused and to stop this trauma from continuing to occur everyday. It is a public safety issue when families are being ripped apart and children no longer feel safe leaving their homes. I am asking, and our neighbors, friends and families are asking for you to call on the Mayor to end MPD collaboration with federal immigration authorities.

Thank you

Georgia Handforth

Good morning, Chairperson Pinto and members of the Committee. My name is Georgia Handforth and I live in Ward 4: Columbia Heights and Petworth. I'm here today as a community member to testify about what safety means to us here in DC.

I would like to start by saying the names of Demetrius Alston, Kevin Booker, and David Warren Childs. Their lives matter, their memories live on, and they should still be alive today. These are the stakes of what we are discussing.

Speaking with neighbors over the years, I know there are men in this city who are fathers, workers, business owners, husbands, friends, and pillars of their community. These are grown men who feel that the years of life they have been blessed with and all that they have accomplished have been possible because of opportunities they had as teenagers: opportunities to work and get experience and skills thanks to Mayor Berry's programs, opportunities to connect with adults in their life in a positive way and see a future for themselves. What might have happened to those men if as teenagers all they saw was powerful people in their city wanting to lock them up, throw them in cages, throw them away? What future neighbors, future families, future business owners, what future of DC are we also surveilling, handcuffing in the street, shoving into cars and roach-infested cells, and giving up on?

When we make being a young person in public illegal, we are going to have more young people locked up. When we have more guns on our streets, including as we well know in the hands of sworn officers, we are going to have more shootings and more deaths. When MPD and federal agents are told by the elected head of the country "now they are allowed to do whatever the hell they want," and our Mayor, our Chief of Police, and the Chair of our Council Public Safety Committee are all standing in line to agree, we are going to see, we have seen, unaccountable and unlawful violence that leaves our communities grieving and and looking for answers about why armed officers won't show us their faces, their badges, or their warrants.

What supports and services for our communities, our neighbors, and our young people are we letting MPD and DOC defund to pay for more overtime, more people in cages, more unsolved cases, and more wrongful death lawsuits and settlements? What evidence informed the decision in B26-0052 to have a gun violence prevention Implementation Team made up of seven members who are MPD, prosecutors, or from the courts, only three members who work in offering proactive supports and services, and no mandated members with specialized experience in human development and behavioral health? Why would we give MPD more power to arrest our youth at a time when federal judges are highlighting the unlawful arrests by federal agents that we have seen riding and collaborating with MPD?

The public safety we want, for ourselves and for the future of DC, is an end to MPD-ICE collaboration, a public hearing where MPD leadership answers our questions about their collaboration with federal agents, and re-funding our communities, including more resources for ERAP, health care, youth programming, behavioral and mental health services, supports for people who have been brutalized and families that have been separated during this occupation, and community-oriented de-escalation and conflict resolution programs.

Thank you.

Donna Breslin

My name is Donna Breslin. I've lived in Capitol Hill, Ward 6, for more than 25 years. Actually, I was born at Columbia Hospital for Women when my father was serving in the US Navy at the Navy Yard during World War II. My daughter also served as a doctor in the Navy. **I respect the military.**

I have loved living in DC until very recently. I have been very happy with the improvement in public safety in our city due to the strong efforts of our mayors, city council members and our police force. Together, they have created a much safer and economically viable neighborhood for me and my husband since we moved here in 1999. **Crime and economic statistics bear this out.**

However, in the past year, under the guise of "public safety", measures have been taken to make me feel less safe and impoverish our city. Of particular concern is having ICE showing up at our schools, courts, restaurants, Home Depot's, etc. to arrest hard-working people who have immigrated to this country. Many of them are trying to get their papers the "right way".

According to the little data that we have from these raids, a huge percentage of the people ICE apprehends, sometimes in a vicious manner, have no criminal record. I say "guise of public safety" because the problems of violence don't seem to have a lot to do with the immigrant population in this city. **I would say it's more the gun laws and enforcement.**

The way this affects me is I am embarrassed to be part of a country that would do this to people. I support taking vicious criminals off our streets. But, I am very concerned about the Democratic norms, like DUE PROCESS and human decency, that ICE and other federal forces break every day. And these measures are affecting my quality of life.

It seems to me, as a citizen of the city, that we are not given many rights because we are not part of a state. Laws that the mayor and the City Council create to enhance our safety— that I and my fellow citizens vote for— are sometimes overridden by people in the Congress. Right now they are trying to overturn our public safety laws about high-speed chases, bail policy, and others. These actions by the Congress, that overrule my vote with the majority, **make me feel like I am not a part of a democracy.**

I support our local police and the laws that make them wear body cameras, make them responsible for using their firearms, and give them training for deal with urban crime and medical/psychological events. Federal forces do not abide by these laws.

Please do all you can to control the federal forces interacting with DC residents..

Courtney Bickert

I am deeply concerned about public safety in DC and, in particular, the role of the MPD and federal enforcement agencies in creating an increasingly unsafe environment in our city. I have personally witnessed MPD involvement in an unnecessarily violent detainment of an individual on 14th and Massachusetts Ave, NW. During this incident a man had been knocked from his moped and chased through Thomas Circle (including a vehicle pursuit by an unparked van speeding around the circle in the opposite direction of traffic). The man was apprehended and was sitting compliantly and calmly on the curb. The MPD officer violently turned the individual onto his stomach on the concrete sidewalk, shoving his face into the concrete to switch his zip ties from the front to behind his back. I reported this incident.

We have consistently witnessed MPD involvement in ICE, HSI and other federal agent actions against the residents of DC. I would like to highlight a specific incident: the pre-dawn multi-agency raid that occurred on Friday, October 24, 2025, at a residential building at Wisconsin Avenue NW & O Street NW in Georgetown. As a Ward 2 resident this incident occurred in my ward and therefore I have a specific interest in it. I am even more concerned about this incident because of eye-witness accounts of MPD and National Guard direct involvement and the lack of public transparency (no filed after action report for example) and the potential misconduct (pointing guns directly at residents, lack of warrants etc).

Multiple eyewitness accounts—first reported by *Migrant Insider* and later summarized by *The Georgetown*—describe a coordinated operation involving U.S. Marshals, U.S. Park Police, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the **Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)**, and what residents believed to be the **National Guard**.

Residents describe forced entry at approximately **3:30 a.m.**, guns pointed at tenants inside their homes, zip-ties or handcuffs, selective searches targeting Latino residents, and at least one live rifle round left behind. Witnesses estimate that 10–12 residents were taken, and reporting indicates that two individuals were deported to Venezuela one week later, though no agency has publicly confirmed identities, charges, or legal process. Following the raid, Latino tenants were told by the landlord to vacate the building by the end of the month, without written notice or judicial process as required under DC law.

This incident raises serious questions about civil liberties, public safety policy, and the treatment of **our neighbors**: immigrant and Latino residents in our city. We ask for your leadership in securing a transparent, accountable response that protects every resident's rights and safety. Members of Free DC have personally visited the site and to the best of their ability have confirmed that the incident did occur and that residents are being evicted and we are simultaneously pursuing other avenues to gather information about this specific incident and the questions it raises.

Requests for Information and Oversight

As Chair of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, we respectfully request your leadership in securing answers to the following questions:

Warrantless Detainments and Arrests

1. Now that a Judge has ruled that federal agents in DC must stop conducting warrantless arrests in the District, what are you, Councilperson Pinto in your leadership role on the Committee for Judiciary and Public Safety, the City Council, the Mayor, and Chief Sith going to do to ensure that these warrantless arrests do in fact take place and to assure the residents of DC that MPD will not participate in such arrests and detainments (such as the one I described earlier).

MPD role and authorization

1. Was MPD formally involved in this operation? If so, in what capacity and under whose command?
2. What agreements or MOUs govern MPD participation in ICE or multi-agency residential operations?
3. Did MPD review or approve the operational plan, warrant, and use-of-force protocols?

National Guard involvement (ask of MPD and/or Joint Task Force: JIC Contact information, Email: jtf-dcmediadesk@army.mil, Phone: 202-880-4267

1. Can MPD confirm for us what National Guard units were involved? We understand it was TF Magnolia, which are troops from LA and MS?
2. Under what legal authority and rules of engagement was this engagement?
3. Are Guard personnel currently participating in enforcement or perimeter functions in other DC residential settings?

Warrant, legal process, and use of force (asks of MPD)

1. Was there a warrant for the raid? What did it authorize, and will it be made public?
2. Why was no warrant or documentation shown or left with residents, if eyewitness reports are accurate?
3. What is the District's policy on pointing firearms at residents and detaining individuals who are not named targets?

Tenant rights and landlord conduct (TranGroup)

1. Did the landlord or TranGroup LLC coordinate with government agencies before or after the raid?
2. Have any legal eviction notices been issued, and do they comply with DC's just-cause requirements?
3. What steps is the District taking to prevent coercive or unlawful eviction?
 1. Will the Council initiate or support an independent investigation into:
 - a. Excessive force and racial targeting
 - b. Improper role of the National Guard
 - c. Coordination between landlord and enforcement agencies
 1. What housing, legal, and emergency support is being offered to affected tenants?

Requested actions

We respectfully ask that you:

- Hold an urgent oversight hearing on the raid and the role of MPD and the National Guard
- Request public release of relevant incident reports, interagency agreements, and any warrant
- Ensure enforcement of DC tenant protection laws and prevent unlawful displacement
- Support a pause on eviction actions until full legal review is completed

Christine Khoury

Hello Chair Pinto and Committee Members,

My name is Christine Khoury and I was born and raised in DC. I recently moved back here and have been living in Ward 5 for the past 2 years. Returning to my hometown at such a tumultuous time in our history, both locally and nationally, has been, quite frankly, heartbreaking. Today, I am testifying to stand with DC's immigrant community against ICE and against MPD collaboration with ICE. I want to be very clear, MPD and ICE are harming our communities through an unlawful collaboration that needs to end.

The intimidation and kidnapping faced by our immigrant neighbors amount to nothing short of a human rights crisis. The violence of ICE's actions does not just extend to those whom ICE has harassed or taken directly, but also ripples throughout our communities, causing further damage. I have heard so many stories from neighbors and friends that I, perhaps naively, never would have thought possible in my city. I spoke with one woman who has had 6 of her family members detained by ICE. I have met so many families who have lost their primary breadwinner due to detentions and are now facing housing insecurity, food insecurity, or both. In this season when we all want to spend time with our families, so many of our neighbors are not only missing loved ones around the table, but are not sure where their next meal is coming from.

To add insult to injury, I suspect most of us in attendance today have at least seen some fraction of the abundant video evidence showing MPD collusion with federal agents, turning our neighbors over to them, sometimes even as they are begging for help. At a recent ANC meeting (ANC 8A, commissioner Jamila White), MPD Lieutenant Kerron Roberts testified to MPD collaboration with federal partners, including ICE, through something called the DC Safe Initiative. None of this keeps us safe.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done, but I will limit myself to 3 actionable demands: 1) end MPD-ICE collaboration 2) make all data that has been shared with ICE and the federal task force public, and, 3) while I am thankful for the opportunity we have been given to testify today, my most urgent demand is that a hearing take place where MPD leadership is present and held accountable and can answer the community's questions around their destructive collaboration with federal agents.

UPDATED

12/04/2025

Testimony of Edna Boone Temaner

To the DC Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, MLK

My name is Edna Boone Temaner, and I live in Ward 6 on Capitol Hill. I'm a member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church and the Washington Interfaith Network.

Recently my son retired after 20 years in the AirForce. This is the first time in my life that a family member is not serving in the armed forces. I have pride and affinity for the military and the horrible death of Sarah Beckstrom hit hard. I didn't sleep well on Thanksgiving and found myself thinking about her, her family, what it meant for the city, and how preventable her death was. There is no excuse for this violence and I believe the militarization of our city breeds it.

I understand you can not necessarily stop the federal occupation, but you have a duty to resist it every step of the way. For almost a year our unhoused community, migrant and refugee neighbors, and black youth have endured harassment, disappearance, unaccountable federal shootings, unmarked vehicles, unidentified agents, and economic hardship under this occupation. I have seen the unmarked vans at the back of the Capitol and I have witnessed unmarked men in black with flak jackets, guns and head gear at 3rd and Pennsylvania.

Fear and anxiety do not lead to peace and prosperity. What parent wants their child playing in the shadows of M16s carried by the National Guard? What tourist wants to come spend their time and money in the city with these images?

We are better than this.

As soon as a federal judge ruled that the ongoing deployment by the Trump administration was unlawful, the mayor and the council needed to act.

DC residents and city council have a history of showing compassion. As a community, we are called to stand up in this moment. As a moral matter, it is wrong for the city to collaborate with ICE as they violate due process through racial profiling, stopping and detaining workers, arresting migrants at court hearings, and terrifying school children.

My faith calls me to stand for justice and equity for all members of our community, especially those who have the least access to resources. As our elected officials, I believe you are entrusted to enact voter's values and must do all in your power to protect all DC residents.

- I ask for no metropolitan police department collaboration with ICE and no collaboration with federal agencies on any matters regarding immigration.
- I ask that you require federal agents
- I ask for the council to work with the mayor to rescind executive order 25-090.
- I ask for DC to reclaim its status as a sanctuary city that values all human beings.
- I ask that we address public safety issues at the root cause level.

I appreciate your time and consideration, and I ask for your immediate action.



#TeacherSolutions
#EducatorWellness

Testimony of Scott Goldstein
Executive Director, EmpowerEd
DC Council Hearing on Youth Safety
December 4, 2025

As a former DC high school teacher who spent a decade educating and caring for my students as whole people I feel I can say with confidence that the strategies that have been employed in the name of safety- from youth curfews to sports game prohibitions are not as some have said “band aids”. These strategies don’t stop the flow of blood, they are in fact drawing blood. They aren’t temporarily making the situation better while we also work on long term solutions, they are in fact making the problem worse.

I think the committee and this council have failed to understand how teenagers in particular, need a sense of agency and power. It’s a stage of life where you are nearing adulthood and searching for independence and the more adults try to control you the more you will resist and search for opportunities to claim your power. The more we say “you can’t” to things young people deserve a yes to- like the simple ability to be free in their city and with their friends- the less we will like what they choose to do instead.

This is a time where so many in our community feel powerless. But community members and organizations are doing everything in our capacity to build power. To give the community a sense of agency to fight back. But the approach towards youth has been to rob them of their power. I know that if we want safety, the approaches that work the best will be to invest in programs that give young people a feeling of control over their own destiny- their days, their movement, their fun, their decisions about their future. That’s why programs like Black Swan, Critical Exposure, Mikva Challenge, Young Women’s Project and others work. They give young people real power. That’s why athletics is so good for young people. They develop identity and they feel part of something. Curfews make young people feel not wanted and NOT part of our city. And that will always produce LESS safety. They will, as a natural human reaction, respond

by trying to claim places as their own and reclaim power. If you want to understand “teen takeovers”, you have to analyze how to give young people control and power at the age they yearn for it most.

It is truly unfathomable to me that at this point- after months of terror inflicting by federal forces on our neighbors- this committee still hasn’t held a hearing to oversee and hold accountable local agencies for collaboration with this threat. For anyone who believes that this is the more adults or rational choice to not make the situation worse- I’d call on you to reflect on how that strategy has done nothing over the past six months to ease the pain of the status quo on neighbors. We hear this administration say that boundaries for young people are an act of love as you clamp down on youth but refuse to enforce boundaries on our own local agencies acting in direct defiance of DC values and the law.

Chairwoman Pinto I know you’re working to propose measures the commute views as proactive ways to keep young people engaged and safe. But we need you and all council members to use your full power to move proactively strategies developed WITH young people and not for them with as much urgency and vigor as you’ve moved to punish all young people for the actions of a few.

We need swift movement on universal out of school time funding. We need recreation centers in every ward with expanded hours. We need more funding for mentorship programs. And we need you to find ways to break the bureaucratic hurdles to get dollars to community base organizations, many of whom don’t have nonprofit status. And while you do all of that- we need proactive investments in rich experiential learning for young people that keep them engaged in school and expand their sense of the possible. We’ll expect that of you in the coming budget.

**Testimony of Emily Cassometus
before the Council of the District of Columbia
Committee on Judiciary & Public Safety's
Hearing on Public Safety in DC**

December 4, 2025

Options for Federal Officer Accountability Through DC Law

Good morning, Chairperson Pinto and members of the DC Council. My name is Emily Cassometus and I am an Assistant Professor of Law at the University of the District of Columbia's David A. Clarke School of Law, where I serve as director of the Legislation Clinic. I also co-chair Free DC's Local Government working group. I am a Ward 5 resident and have called DC home for nearly fifteen years. I am testifying in my personal capacity today.

For at least 25 years, the District of Columbia has been the most heavily policed jurisdiction in the United States of America due to the broad policing powers granted to federal agencies.¹ Since the president declared a "crime emergency"² sixteen weeks ago, policing by federal law enforcement has intensified even further with the unequivocal support of Mayor Bowser, Chief Smith, and MPD.³ You will hear from dozens and dozens of witnesses today who will describe the harm this has inflicted on them and their loved ones. They will testify about the thousands of Black and Brown people who federal law enforcement and MPD are working

¹ [National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997](#), P.L. 105-32, Title VII ("Revitalization Act") §§ 11101-11002, as attached to Balanced Budget Act.

² [Restoring Law and Order in the District of Columbia](#), Exec. Order No. 14333, 90 Fed. Reg. 39301 (Aug. 11, 2025).

³ [Creation of the Safe and Beautiful Emergency Operations Center](#), D.C. Exec. Order No. 2025-090 (Sept. 2, 2025).

together to target, stop, arrest, and incarcerate. About the impact of living in an occupied city, being shot at, having people you love disappeared. I ask that you listen. Then, I ask that you act.

I hear daily laments from DC's elected leaders about the long list of things that you cannot do because of DC's unique constitutional status and the decisions you cannot make because of the separation of powers. I am not asking you to amend the U.S. Constitution, to vote in Congress, or to convince any executive to change their mind. I am asking you to use the power vested in you as legislators for the Council of the District of Columbia to pass laws that can be wielded by the people as shields, swords, and scales of justice.

For instance, using existing statutory framework, you can act to legally limit federal law enforcement officer behavior and to remove protection from officers breaking the law. You have the power to subject ICE, HSI, and the rest of the federal officers on DC's streets to the same rules with which other federal agencies with MPD cooperation agreements must comply.⁴ You have the power to require that all officers from all agencies who are at the scene of an MPD arrest be listed by name and badge number in an arrest report along with descriptions of all their uses of force. You have the power to repeal local qualified immunity protections for federal officers making arrests under DC law.⁵ You have the power to force federal officers working with MPD to unmask and adhere to our laws on public identification.⁶ My written testimony provides a menu of accountability options from which you can choose.

None of these law changes have a fiscal impact. None of them require the buy-in of the executive to implement. None of them require Congressional majorities to enact next week on an

⁴ D.C. Code [§ 5-133.17](#). Cooperative agreements between federal agencies and the Metropolitan Police Department.

⁵ D.C. Code [§ 5-301](#). Powers and duties of federal law enforcement officers when making arrests for nonfederal offenses.

⁶ D.C. Code [§ 5-302](#). Restrictions on powers and duties of federal law enforcement officers.

emergency basis. None of them even require your oversight – the people will seek enforcement of your laws in the courts. All you need to do is use your legislative authority. Please, listen today, then tomorrow, act.

Options for Federal Officer Accountability Through DC Law

Prepared by Emily Cassometus, Assistant Professor of Law

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Background

- DC is the most heavily policed place in the country because of the mix of local and federal agencies that have broad policing powers here.
- Since Trump's Executive Order in August, more federal agencies than ever have been policing DC streets.
- It is unclear whether these new agencies, like ICE, HSI, and even the IRS police, have signed cooperation agreements with MPD.
- The law governing MPD collaboration with federal agencies was originally created through the Revitalization Act, the 1997 congressional law that instituted the control board and federalized much of DC's criminal legal system.

Overview of Current DC Law

- Allows MPD to enter into cooperation agreements with federal agencies that give the federal agencies the power to:
 - Patrol the District;
 - Make arrests under local law; and
 - Take people into custody under local law.
- When operating under authority granted by a cooperation agreement, federal officers:
 - Get the same qualified immunity as MPD officers as long as they have probable cause to make an arrest or are assisting an MPD officer in an emergency;
 - Can legally carry weapons off duty;
 - Are subject to the restrictions in [Title V, Chapter 1](#), including rules on arrests, use of force, and prohibited tactics.
- MPD Chief:

- Must tell the public which federal agencies have authority to make arrests anywhere in DC; and
 - Has the power to decide whether alleged misconduct of officers covered by any particular agreement should be covered by the Police Complaints Board; and
 - Has the power to decide whether more specific information about the cooperative agreement should be shared publicly.
- No DC law or court rule exists enumerating what must be included in an arrest report or a *Gerstein* (probable cause) affidavit.

Oversight Options Under Current Law

- Ask the Chief which federal agencies currently have general police powers in DC
- Request copies of all cooperation agreements
- Demand that the Chief make all cooperation agreements covered by Police Complaints Board
- If the LEAs involved in various incidents have cooperation agreements, OAG can sue for injunctive relief to force them to adhere to the restrictions MPD is subject to, like vehicular pursuit rules.

Proposed Law Changes

- 1) [§ 5–133.17](#). Cooperative agreements between federal agencies and the Metropolitan Police Department. Allows federal agencies to enter cooperation agreements with MPD giving them broad policing powers in DC. Also allows MPD to provide federal agencies with material support.
 - **Option 1: Add ICE, CBP, and other agencies currently deployed to the list of agencies with cooperative agreements with the District so that they are explicitly subject to the restrictions in § 5–302.** Subsection (d) currently lists 32 agencies (including INS, the predecessor agency to ICE and CBP), plus a catch all, “Any other law enforcement agency of the Federal government that the Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department and the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia deem appropriate to enter into an agreement pursuant to this section.”. This shouldn’t be necessary, but would clear up any vagueness argument.
- 2) Title 5, Chapter 3. Federal Law Enforcement Officer Cooperation With Metropolitan Police Department.

- [§ 5–301](#). Powers and duties of federal law enforcement officers when making arrests for nonfederal offenses. Gives federal LEO operating through cooperation agreements the same legal protections and immunity as MPD officers and allows them to legally carry weapons off-duty.
 - **Option 2: Repeal paragraph (a)(2) so that federal LEO do not have the same legal protections and qualified immunity as MPD does for actions surrounding misdemeanor arrests.** This might discourage federal LEO from pursuing people on low-level offenses like tinted windows or expired plates, which have led to police shootings.
 - **Option 3: Repeal the whole section so that federal LEO do not share MPD’s qualified immunity protections or ability to carry weapons off-duty in DC.** This would make it so that federal LEO do not have any local protections. They would still have federal civil protections. Unclear how this would play out in the courts, whether the federal protections would be applied to their local work.
- [§ 5–302](#). Restrictions on powers and duties of federal law enforcement officers. Subjects federal LEO operating through cooperation agreements to the same “restrictions” imposed on MPD by Title 5, Chapter 1. Three are explicitly mentioned: arrest, use of force, and prohibited techniques. Other sections in Chapter 1 include body-worn cameras and preventing white supremacy in policing.
 - **Option 4: Pass a bill moving [§ 5–337.01](#), the law governing police identification to the public, and [§ 5–365.01](#), restrictions on vehicular pursuits, to Title 5, Chapter 1.** This includes them among other restrictions that are imposed on MPD and will also apply to federal LEO operating through cooperation agreements.
 - **Option 5: Pass new law to add restrictions to MPD, and therefore federal LEO operating through cooperation agreements.** These could first be done on an emergency basis. Ideas include:
 - Banning non-medical masks;
 - Limiting enforcement activity in “sensitive locations” like schools and hospitals to emergencies and warrants;
 - Limiting the size of caravans; and

- Adding prohibited techniques, like shooting at vehicles.
 - [§ 5-303](#). Public information program; priority at the scene. Gives MPD Chief authority to decide whether a cooperation agreement should be covered by the Police Complaints Board and whether details about the cooperative agreement should be shared publicly.
 - **Option 6: Pass a bill requiring all cooperation agreements to be covered by the PCB.**
 - **Option 7: Pass a bill mandating the publication of all cooperation agreements, or at least additional details.**
- 3) The content of MPD arrest reports is governed by general order and the content of probable cause affidavits is governed by *Gerstein v. Pugh*, 420 U.S. 103 (1975).
- **Option 8: Add language to Title 23, Chapter 5, Warrants and Arrests, to mandate the inclusion of certain information in an arrest report or *Gerstein* affidavit, including:**
 - Name, badge number, and agency of every LEO on scene;
 - Whether force was used by any LEO on scene, and if so, a description of the force used.



Katharine Landfield, Fair Budget Coalition
Written Testimony
Committee on Judiciary & Public Safety
Public Hearing on Public Safety in the District of Columbia
December 4, 2025

Thank you for holding this hearing, Chair Pinto and members of the Committee. My name is Katharine Landfield. I am a long-time DC resident, daughter of a child refugee, and granddaughter of a political prisoner in a repressive regime. I am also the Senior Advocacy Strategist at Fair Budget Coalition. Our over 60 organizational members and many more community members together advocate for policies to improve systemic racial, economic, and social inequities in the District. We believe that the budget is everybody's business and deeply value participatory budget processes.

At this time of occupation, ICE, other federal law enforcement agencies, and MPD are regularly violating the human rights of our immigrant neighbors, Black and brown youth, and residents living outside, as well as terrorizing them. MPD collaboration with federal forces has undermined true community safety, the rule of law, our human rights protections, and peoples' ability to protect themselves.

Fair Budget Coalition urges you to protect these vulnerable neighbors by immediately ceasing MPD collaboration with federal forces and ensuring that all human and civil rights afforded to District residents are enforced and maintained.

Aside from that very straightforward and urgent demand, I want to describe here how elected leaders have made budget decisions that have enabled and worsened the harm to communities at the hands of both federal and local law enforcement.

Safety net cuts have destabilized residents and left them without programs that would literally keep them safely out of harm's way during law enforcement surges. Through the federal occupation, we see clearly how the underfunding of community needs and

overfunding of the police have increased the attacks on immigrants, chronically unhoused adults living outside, and Black and brown youth.

Neighbors Experiencing Homelessness Who Are Living Outside

Ironically, DC became the first city to include homeless status as a protected trait in our local Human Rights Act (non-discrimination policy; Human Rights Enhancement Act of 2022), and the Mayor's Office on Racial Equity named housing as a human right. Yet the mayor reversed course on ending homelessness and also acquiesced to encampment clearances at the orders of the president, violating even our local policies mandating a minimum notice before a clearance. What had been 14-days notice became less than 1 day. The standard encampment clearing protocol is now 7-days notice, except in case of an immediate disposition; however, there are no clear metrics as to what constitutes a public health or safety risk to merit an immediate clearance.

Yet it would be impossible for police, both local and federal, to terrorize unhoused communities if the mayor and Council had not significantly slashed funding for both ERAP (eviction prevention) and housing vouchers. In the past two budgets alone, the mayor funded 0 permanent supportive housing for individual adults experiencing chronic homelessness, and the Council only managed to fund a small number for FY25 and 0 for FY26. As the president threatened these neighbors with violent trashing of their tents, possessions, and community, the budget failures left them utterly vulnerable and in the direct path of harm.

Immigrants

Both journalists and eyewitness accounts have documented clearly how ICE abductions are terrorizing communities and devastating families. ICE is racially profiling brown and Black people who *appear* to be immigrants for violent, extralegal abductions. (We do not call these attacks, based on racial profiling, "deportations," which are transparent, legal processes with protections for due process.) MPD, in collaborating with ICE, is routinely discriminating against people with these protected traits under the DC Human Rights Act: color, national origin (including language spoken), personal appearance, and race.

Moreover, MPD is in violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of the Sanctuary Values Act when it cooperates, shares information, and assists in these attacks. It is essential that DC lawmakers protect residents, uphold the Sanctuary Values Act and DC Human Rights Act, as well as provide oversight to understand the nature and extent of MPD cooperation.

Most recently, Judge Beryl Howell ruled that ICE has been seizing residents without judicial warrants and without probable cause. Given the illegality of these moves, it is doubly important that MPD not be assisting or cooperating with federal forces in any way.

The sense that DC does not value or protect its immigrant community members is only reinforced by budget decisions made this past summer. Policymakers allowed the planned dismantling of Alliance healthcare for 26,000 immigrant users. Council also voted for pay cuts to the heavily immigrant restaurant and child care workforces. And policymakers failed to curb rising housing costs, housing insecurity, and food insecurity. The DC government has not offered these community members any shelter from the storm, only deepened their vulnerability to harm (being the primary workforce for much of our local economy—hospitality and tourism—notwithstanding).

Black and Brown Youth

Black and brown youth, particularly those from working-class and poor families, have always faced higher rates of criminalization compared to their higher income and white peers. But under the current law enforcement surge, they are even more targeted and more in fear, even in such mundane acts as going to and from school or hanging out with friends. Young people have seen armed National Guard members patrolling at school, ICE has traumatized students through violent interactions and abductions at arrival and dismissal, and MPD has been called on students for “walking while Black.”

It is for these reasons that we are deeply opposed to a youth curfew. At this time of overzealous and overwhelming policing, a curfew brings even greater risk of harm to BIPOC youth. Knowing that my own (white) children (now adults) would very likely not have been subject to curfew enforcement makes it all the more egregious.

All such law enforcement encounters cross into human rights discrimination due to profiling of these BIPOC youth and targeting of specific geographic locations. The youth in my more affluent, whiter neighborhood, for example, are not facing profiling or the assumption of criminality.

Again, we see how a budget that fails to serve its young people makes them more vulnerable to criminalization and targeting by law enforcement. In addition to the scramble every year for strong budgets for schools serving students with the highest needs, we have seen sluggish growth in OST services in spite of their importance in improving truancy and post-secondary success. If students were deeply engaged in quality OST programs, they would not even be on the streets at risk for being profiled

and harassed. Notably, unhoused youth are even more at risk for harm from aggressive policing, from living outside and lacking in family support, and many being visibly queer. DC must invest more in quality, engaging out of school time programs and recreation, as well as access to community health, mental health, and social supports.

Our Asks

1. We urge you to hold MPD and any other executive actors accountable for complying in advance (and/or overcomplying) with dangerous and discriminatory federal forces. Uphold our DC Human Rights Act and the Sanctuary Values Act, and hold MPD accountable to following both.
2. End MPD-ICE collaboration, including joint traffic and street enforcement with MPD and federal immigration agents, which expired after September 10.
3. Rescind Chief Smith's Executive Order No. 25-005 permitting data investigation for ICE, transporting ICE agents, and transporting individuals for release to ICE. ICE is now a \$45B agency. It can drive itself.
4. End the use of youth curfews, which grossly increase the risk of criminalization and violence. Invest in meaningful programming for youth to keep them engaged, learning, having fun, and safe.
5. Demand transparency and information about the nature and extent of collaboration between MPD and ICE and other federal law enforcement agencies. Their joint efforts must not be hidden from the public.
6. Decrease the DC carceral and policing budget to minimize criminalization of these targeted communities; use the savings to fund the safety net.
7. Fully fund the safety net and critical programs that allow immigrants, neighbors experiencing chronic homelessness outside, and Black and brown to thrive. Take steps to build true community safety and wellbeing directly into the budget!
8. Raise the revenue needed for these important investments through better taxation of wealth. DC has among the largest and most racially disparate wealth concentration in the country. Just 0.4% of DC households (roughly 1500 or so tax units) have net worth over \$30 million, on average, and hold a whopping 46% of all of DC's wealth (~\$183 *billion*).



Oversight of Federal Law Enforcement Deployment & Local Collaboration

December 2025

Submitted to the Council of the District of Columbia, Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety (Hearing ID 1988)

Date: 12/4/2025

Muslims for Just Futures (MJF) is a grassroots organization based in Washington, DC, working to build power in Muslim communities through collective care, organizing, advocacy, and movement-building.

As we approach nearly four months of military occupation in D.C., communities across the district have been calling on the Council to take decisive action in response to the collaboration between federal agencies such as Immigration and Customs and Enforcement and local law enforcement. Residents of D.C. have raised alarm about the ways these partnerships have resulted in violations of District law—including protections established under the Sanctuary Values Amendment Act—and have contributed to racial profiling, violent arrests in our neighborhoods, and shooting at civilians. Community members continue to report incidents involving federal agents and MPD that include the disappearance of loved ones, unlawful detentions, and shootings, all of which have heightened fear and instability for Black and Brown residents. We have consistently sounded the alarm and warned that unchecked collaboration between the city and federal agents will serve as a pretext for the Trump administration to further its white supremacist, anti-immigrant, and islamophobic agenda.

On November 26, 2025, two National Guard members were tragically shot near the White House, allegedly by a man of Afghan descent. The Trump administration is now exploiting this tragedy for the purpose of accelerating a racist and cruel agenda – to [effectively shut down much of our legal immigration system](#), dismantle humanitarian protections, and make more of our community members subject to detention and deportation. The council's inaction to end the occupation of our city and their acquiescence to the whims of the Trump Administration makes them complicit in the impending harm that could impact millions of Muslim and other immigrants in D.C. and across the country.

As the federal government is pausing asylum processing, reviewing the green card approvals of certain individuals, and scaling up the federal deployment actions that were tried and tested first here in D.C., this council has failed to address issues of concern to our communities and instead turned its attention to harming Black and Brown youth. This hearing is considering legislation that



MuslimsforJustFutures.org

would make the juvenile curfew permanent—an approach we firmly reject and one that risks deepening racialized policing and exposing young people of color to further violence and criminalization.

The Trump administration's recent policies targeting people from Muslim countries, refugees, and asylum seekers will result in more widespread and violent enforcement operations in our city and across the country. Residents rightfully fear that the continued and expanded federal-local collaboration between MPD, and federal agents will lead to more raids, checkpoints, and sweeps. This is all while the Sanctuary Values Amendment Act is being weakened in practice, as MPD and other city agencies engage in joint enforcement operations with federal partners that fall outside the law's intent of protection of immigrant communities. There is little to no transparency around the presence, authority, and activities of federal forces operating in the District, as well as the role MPD is playing in these operations.

Recommendations:

- 1. Reaffirm and enforce the Sanctuary Values Amendment Act**

The Council should make clear that D.C. will not participate in or facilitate federal immigration operations and should ensure that MPD complies with all sanctuary protections. Any executive actions or policies that undermine the SVA should be reversed, including the Police Chief's executive order 25-005.

- 2. Hold comprehensive oversight hearings on MPD–federal collaboration.**

The Council should create avenues for directly impacted residents and advocates to shape policies and hold agencies accountable. As a first step, an on-the-record public hearing should examine how MPD is cooperating with federal agencies, including ICE, and should scrutinize use of plainclothes officers, unmarked vehicles, joint arrests, and information-sharing practices, as well as other transparency measures that we elaborate on below.

- 3. Ensure transparency and public reporting.**

MPD should be required to provide detailed information about any enforcement operations conducted with federal partners, including arrest data, use-of-force incidents, demographic details, and accurate documentation of all agencies and agents who are on the scene and active in enforcement activity.

- 4. Oppose efforts to make the juvenile curfew permanent.**

Making the curfew permanent would further criminalize young people, intensify racial profiling, and expand opportunities for federal-local enforcement entanglement.

- 5. Increase support for immigrant communities and legal services.**

Expanded funding for healthcare, housing, legal representation and community-based organizations will ensure that residents affected by enforcement actions have access to counsel and essential services.



MuslimsforJustFutures.org

6. Assert the District's right to limit federal overreach.

The Council should take a clear public stance against the long-term embedding of federal agents in local policing and defend the autonomy and safety of D.C. residents. If local leaders fail to do so, they inadvertently enable anti-immigrant and authoritarian agendas.

Many of these recommendations are echoed in a public letter that MJF is signatory to, alongside 57 other local organizations, calling on Councilmember Pinto, as Chair of the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety to take decisive action to protect Black and Brown Washingtonians.

As Muslim and immigrant communities across the nation reel at slew of new immigration policies that will inevitably make many vulnerable to detention and potential deportation, the District is at a critical juncture. Without clear action from the Council, federal-local enforcement partnerships will continue to erode D.C. 's sanctuary protections, put residents at risk, and perpetuate fear and violence at the hands of MPD and federal agencies. We urge the Council, and in particular this Committee, to act swiftly to restore accountability, enforce the law, and protect the rights and safety of all District residents.

Good morning Councilmember(s). Thank you for hosting this hearing on Public Safety in DC and allowing me the chance to testify about what I've been seeing in my neighborhood. I provided similar testimony at Councilmember Nadeau's Hearing on potential Human Rights Violations by MPD on October 29th and I refer you to that testimony for specific details on the events I have witnessed—since then, these issues have become even more alarming.

My name is Robin Lipp. I'm testifying as a DC resident, as a parent of a 17-month-old daughter, and as someone who has chosen to plant roots in DC because my wife and I loved the vibrant community we found here. I am aware that there is crime in DC. But overall, I have felt safe here—until recently.

After President Trump and Mayor Bowser began collaborating in August, I have seen a surge of federal law enforcement in my neighborhood. I have seen masked men with guns jump out of unmarked vehicles and snatch workers off the street. I have seen armed federal agents from many agencies—ICE, HSI, FBI, DEA, Park Police, US Marshals, DSS, CBP, and others who would not identify themselves—stopping or detaining people with no apparent cause or for a minor alleged infraction. In every case I saw, the people stopped or detained were not White and often were not speaking English. And in virtually every case I've seen, MPD has been working hand-in-hand with these federal agencies. I have seen an MPD-CBP detention in front of a school during school hours; I have seen a federal-MPD raid on an apartment building in my neighborhood while walking my daughter to daycare; and I have seen an MPD-federal detention in a public park used by my daughter's daycare. In October, members of my community witnessed federal agents throw a young student into the side of a brick rowhouse.

None of this makes me feel safer, all of this damages trust. The violence I see in my neighborhood is not coming from my neighbors—it's coming from an unprecedented and excessive collaboration between MPD and federal agents, fueled by inaction and lack of oversight from the Mayor, the Chief of Police, and this Council. To be clear, you are putting my family and neighbors at risk every day when heavily armed and sometimes combative federal agents, escorted by MPD, grab people off the streets and harass bystanders. It takes just one mistake by anyone in these highly charged situations to lead to tragedy.

MPD and this Council need to recognize the role you are playing in degrading public safety, eroding the trust that law enforcement needs to function, and enabling the violation of DC law, particularly the DC Human Rights Act and the Sanctuary Values Act.

You control the extent to which our city resources are used to support excessive, violent, or lawless behavior. Mayor Bowser and Chief Smith should immediately repeal their Executive Orders (Bowser's EO 2025-090; Smith's EO 25-005) that facilitate collaboration beyond what federal law requires. The Council should revisit and strengthen the Sanctuary Values Act to clarify that MPD must have no role in immigration enforcement. Residents of DC, your constituents, need your guidance and leadership so that we can protect ourselves and our families.

Thank you.

Individual Testimony
Jordan Kagelmayer
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
Thursday, December 4, 2025
John A. Wilson Building, Room 500

Thank you, Chair Pinto, for holding this hearing. My name is Jordan Kagelmayer. I'm an organizer with Free DC, but I'm here today in a personal capacity, as a resident of the Bloomingdale neighborhood in Ward 5.

I'm here to talk about public safety. Over the last several months, I've had the privilege of working with community members across DC to keep us all safe - not from crime, but from the militarized police that have been deployed throughout our city. Simply put, the Trump regime is using law enforcement to harass DC's kids, terrify our immigrant neighbors, and lock up Black and Brown residents.

Of course, we all know DC has limited control over federal actions. But let's be clear: the amount of harm these fascists have done and continue to do would not be possible without the full compliance and cooperation of our local government. Countless eyewitness reports, video recordings, and news articles show MPD working side by side - quite literally - with the federal gangs terrorizing our communities. And our elected leaders seem happy to sit back and watch.

And so, it has fallen on us to do what the Mayor, the Council, and our own police officers have failed to do: keep us safe. We've all seen the videos - agents threatening bystanders, neighbors pleading for help, children being chased by armed soldiers. But I've also seen what happens after. Since the Mayor welcomed this surge, I've met parents too scared to leave their homes, even just to walk a few blocks to take their kids to school. I've seen families torn apart by ICE, households that can't pay rent anymore because their sole breadwinner was disappeared into an unmarked van. Is that what safety looks like?

Of course not. But I'm not just here to list problems. There are real, tangible steps that the DC Council and you, Chair Pinto, can take to protect our residents. Today's hearing is a start, but it is nowhere near enough. Hold a dedicated oversight hearing to demand answers on MPD's role in federal operations. Strengthen the Sanctuary Values Act to stop MPD traffic stops from turning into immigration arrests. End the youth curfew and invest in support systems, not surveillance.

I recognize, these actions come with risks. We're asking you to protect us, and in a way, that's exactly what you're trying to do. You're trying to protect us from Republican attacks, further threats to Home Rule, all the hypothetical backlash we may face if Council speaks up about this. Chair Pinto, I recognize that you want to protect us from that future. But we need you to find the courage to protect us from what's happening right now.

Thank you.

Tom Meyer

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. As a DC homeowner and Ward 2 resident and voter, the current public safety crisis is the single greatest issue facing the District. The ICE crime wave has so far disappeared 1,600+ residents, with no guarantee of due process and no respect for their civil or human rights. One racial group is being targeted by an extrajudicial militarized force, which is conducting abductions in every corner of the District. And yes, without a warrant it is an abduction. And without due process, it is trafficking.

We need to understand the scale of the violence here in order to address the public safety catastrophe that has unfolded under the Chair's watchful eye. One out of every 438 DC residents has been taken by ICE in a matter of months. 1,600+ real human people -- our neighbors, our friends, our families, our coworkers -- have been taken by often masked, unidentified agents who present no warrant, offer no promise of court proceedings, and engage in no due process.

If caring about your neighbors and constituents isn't enough reason, the Council should be concerned for purely selfish reasons: if due process is gone for one, it is gone for all. What opportunity would you have to prove your citizenship before being sent to the camps, if no judicial process is followed? If abductees are not given a hearing or an opportunity to present evidence, how would you get your passport in front of a judge to set you free? If these neighbors are not served a judicial warrant or engaged by police who identify themselves and provide a badge, what is to stop other bad actors from impersonating ICE and committing their own abductions, as has been documented nationwide.

The impact on the District is stark. Children staying home from school so their parents are not kidnapped at dropoff. Families unable to leave the house. Workers missing shifts, threatening their ability to make rent. The ICE crime wave sweeping DC is a public safety crisis without precedent in modern times. If teen takeovers warranted the swift and extensive action that the Council took, what do 1,600+ abductions warrant?

I understand that during President Trump's fake emergency, civil rights and DC laws were suspended, and the Mayor's office and Council had little recourse. That horrifying reality is not lost on me. But with the fake emergency now over, the lack of action as 1,600+ DC residents -- who the Council has an obligation to represent and protect -- are disappeared, is shocking.

In particular, as MPD has continued to coordinate with ICE and other DHS agencies on immigration enforcement -- not criminal matters -- after the fake emergency ended, Council has taken no public action to end this violation of DC law or hold accountable those who oversaw. DC law is clear: MPD cannot coordinate with DHS agencies on immigration-related matters. There is not wiggle room, nor is it open to interpretation. That is the law. Yet in recent months, there has been extensive public reporting documenting that MPD is violating this law. They are making immigration arrests and handing over the arrested individual to ICE. They are arresting individuals on non-immigration matters and releasing them into ICE custody. They are providing perimeter for warrantless, military-style assaults on DC residential buildings.

This is illegal. MPD is actively and consistently violating DC law. That DC law is in place for good reason: if residents can't feel safe calling MPD when they are the victims of violent crime for fear of being handed off to the extrajudicial secret police, why would any resident turn in a violent offender or seek police help?

In conversations with the Mayor's office and Councilmember Pinto's office, I have been told that this reality is not happening. When presented with public reporting documenting that it is happening, responses stop. That should terrify every single resident of the District.

It is beyond time for the Mayor and the Council to take action. I have heard a lot from this committee about

public safety in the last few years. But now, when a public safety crisis descends on the District, I have seen nothing. At very minimum, the Council should take immediate action to begin enforcing DC law, immediately end MPD's illegal coordination with ICE, and to hold accountable those oversaw this unlawful coordination.

Thank you,
Tom Meyer

Ibrahim Xavier Johnson

We need increased MPD ?? patrols on Eastern Avenue from Meade to Division Avenue along the Maryland border. We also need increased patrols around Ron Brown High School between 9pm and 5am. Sheriff Road from Eastern Avenue to 44th St needs an increased MPD ?? presence.

Franklin Garcia

Testimony for Judiciary and Public Safety DC Council Hearing

Franklin Garcia, Ward 5 Resident

President, DC Latino Leadership
Council
2218 Newton Street NE

Washington
DC 20018

December
3, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding collaboration between local authorities (DC Police) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). My name is Franklin Garcia. I have lived in my current residence for over 15 years, and have been in DC since the 1980's. I would like to share my concerns about how ICE participation with the DC Police affects community trust, safety, and well-being.

Community Trust and Public Safety

- Many residents, regardless of immigration status, may avoid interacting with local law enforcement, including reporting crimes or serving as witnesses, if they fear that contact could lead to immigration consequences.
- Reduced cooperation can make it harder for authorities to investigate crimes or protect vulnerable people.
- Research and case studies from various cities have shown that building trust between residents and local institutions is essential for effective public safety and takes time.

Impact on Families and Community Stability

- Immigration enforcement actions can lead to family separation, which has lasting emotional, financial, and social consequences.
- When families fear deportation, they may withdraw from schools, local programs, and community spaces.

Economic and Social Considerations

- Community members—regardless of immigration status—contribute economically through work, business activity, and taxes.
- Disruptions caused by detention or deportation may harm local businesses, schools, and social networks.

Local Policy Considerations

- Communities across the country have examined alternatives to cooperation agreements with ICE, assessing impacts on safety, trust, costs, and legal responsibilities.
- Transparency, due process protections, and clear boundaries between local services and federal immigration enforcement can support community cohesion.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering this testimony. I respectfully ask the DC Council to evaluate how ICE participation affects community trust, safety, and stability, and to consider approaches that support the well-being of all residents. Franklin Garcia.

Ethan Bensman

I've seen ICE patrolling in city parks like Logan Circle. They intimidate and make life worse for my friends and neighbors. DC Police needs to stop coordinating with this agency who is making all of our lives worse.

Alice Dunne

I ran into a bunch of FBI agents and national guard at a low income housing building next to my house on 7th and S St in what looked to be a raid at about 11:30pm on a Friday night. I politely asked the agents what was going on and they completely ignored me and looked past me while I tried to speak to them. I asked if i should be scared as I live in the neighborhood and they ignored me further. I kept asking until one FBI agent told me to call the FBI hotline, I asked for his name and he said "that doesn't concern you" and gave me the number to call the hotline. I asked an ATF policeman what his name was and he said "they don't put us on the streets with our names." This seriously concerned me and made me feel unsafe in my neighborhood as the police tasked with protecting the public refused to answer a concerned citizens questions or say anything to make me feel less worried. All the times I have seen police and agents in my neighborhood it has been next to low income housing and it has always appeared to be unwarranted. I did not feel more safe because nobody was giving me any information. I support Policing in unsafe areas but I would prefer to support mutual aid efforts instead if arrests that will only serve to further the problems that are already apparent. We need houses for the unhomed and safe injection sites, not more arrests for people who are not causing violence.



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**Testimony of Breanne Palmer
Director of Policy Advocacy, Systemic Advocacy and Law Reform
Legal Aid DC**

**Before the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety
Council of the District of Columbia**

Public Hearing Regarding Public Safety in the District of Columbia

December 4, 2025

Legal Aid DC¹ submits the following testimony regarding public safety in the District of Columbia – in particular, the ongoing collaboration between the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and federal immigration enforcement agencies housed within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), specifically with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).² What began as part of the federal government’s 30-day “crime emergency” in DC has become a continuing collaboration under the guise of assisting federal task forces operating without

¹ Legal Aid DC is the oldest and largest general civil legal services program in the District of Columbia. The largest part of our work is comprised of individual representation in housing, domestic violence/family, public benefits, and consumer law. We also work on immigration law matters and help individuals with the collateral consequences of their involvement with the criminal legal system. From the experiences of our clients, we identify opportunities for court and law reform, public policy advocacy, and systemic litigation. For more information, visit www.LegalAidDC.org.

² EO-25-005 Immigration Enforcement, *District of Columbia Metropolitan Police*, https://go.mpdconline.com/GO/EO_25_005.pdf; Bowser Pressed on DC police, immigration enforcement in tense meeting, *The Washington Post* (October 17, 2025) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/10/17/bowser-mpd-ice-immigration-enforcement/>.

accountability or transparency in the District and surrounding areas.³ Conflicting and contradictory statements from Mayor Bowser, MPD leadership, and DHS spokespeople about the nature, duration, and details of federal immigration collaboration with local law enforcement agencies demonstrate the urgent need for transparency and clarity.⁴

MPD's Collaboration with DHS Agencies Undermines Public Safety

Legal Aid represents and assists District of Columbia residents living in poverty and those living in low-income households, the majority of whom are people of color. Since the federal police takeover in June 2025, our clients not only worry about being unlawfully arrested or detained by DHS agencies like ICE and HSI, but they are also increasingly apprehensive to cooperate with or even call local police because they do not know the extent of MPD's involvement with federal immigration enforcement agencies.⁵

The Constitution and federal law prohibit federal immigration enforcement officers from arresting or detaining an individual without a warrant, absent probable cause and an individualized assessment that the person is a flight risk. In defiance of the law, and to

³ DC leaders oppose patrols with DHS. Are they powerless to stop them?, *The Washington Post* (November 17, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/11/17/dc-police-immigration-task-force/>.

⁴ DC leaders oppose patrols with DHS. Are they powerless to stop them?, *The Washington Post* (November 17, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/11/17/dc-police-immigration-task-force/>; Advocates raise concerns about immigration stops on DC-area parkways, *NBC Washington* (November 3, 2025) https://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/advocates-raise-concerns-immigration-stops-dc-area-parkways/4010438/?_osource=SocialFlowTwt_DCBrand.

⁵ Legal Aid DC filed an *amici curiae* brief on behalf of fellow DC legal service organizations in support of the plaintiff's motion for a preliminary injunction in the case of *Jose Escobar Molina v. U.S. Department of Homeland Security*, Case No. 25-cv-3417-BAH (October 29, 2025), before the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. In our brief, we detailed the harms DHS has inflicted on both DC residents and the legal service providers who serve them. *Amici* to the case include Legal Aid DC, African Communities Together, Ayuda, Bread for the City, Children's Law Center, DC Affordable Law Firm, and Tzedek DC.

meet daily arrest quotas,⁶ officers from DHS agencies like ICE, ERO, and HSI have violently snatched District residents and visitors from their vehicles, homes, doctor's offices, and schools while collaborating with MPD on patrols.⁷ Community members report joint MPD and ICE patrols and stops, oftentimes where federal law enforcement agents are masked and riding in unmarked cars. Several sources also report that MPD continues to share information with DHS agencies about people who are not yet in MPD custody (e.g., during traffic stops), and to provide transportation for DHS officers and the people they arrest and detain.⁸ However, the Executive Office of the Mayor has refused to fully detail or consistently clarify MPD's ongoing collaboration with federal immigration agencies, which facilitates individual and community harm and destroys any semblance of public trust or actualized public safety in DC.

MPD's collaboration with DHS agencies is making DC less safe by suppressing the reporting of crimes.⁹ One of Legal Aid's core immigration practice areas is assisting survivors of human trafficking or certain other violent crimes with obtaining T- and U-visas. These nonimmigrant visas provide temporary lawful status if the survivor also cooperates with law enforcement. Congress created the T- and U-visa categories to strengthen the ability of law enforcement to detect, investigate, and prosecute human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes. However, MPD's collaboration with DHS agencies, which widens the scope and reach of federal immigration enforcement in DC, means immigrant survivors of or even witnesses to crimes are reluctant or entirely unwilling to cooperate with local police. For many, the risk of being exposed to immigration officers or facing dire immigration consequences is too great to seek justice and accountability for themselves or for their fellow community members.

⁶ Judges press Trump administration on deportation quotas, *POLITICO* (July 28, 2025) <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/07/28/judges-trump-administration-deportation-quotas-00480899>.

⁷ See Brief of *Amici Curiae* District of Columbia Legal Services Organizations in Support of Plaintiffs' Motion for a Preliminary Injunction, *Jose Escobar Molina v. U.S. Department of Homeland Security*, Case No. 25-cv-3417-BAH (October 29, 2025).

⁸ EO-25-005 Immigration Enforcement, *District of Columbia Metropolitan Police*, https://go.mpdconline.com/GO/EO_25_005.pdf.

⁹ As ICE increases presence in DC, immigrants say they're scared of calling local police, *The 51st News* (August 29, 2025) <https://51st.news/ice-presence-mpd-fears-dc-takeover/>.

As a stark example, one of our clients is a survivor who was sexually assaulted as a child and previously reported the incident to local police. Despite being able to identify their rapist, our client has stopped cooperating with the police out of fear of immigration enforcement. This harrowing trend undermines the public safety of entire communities, as vulnerable people become increasingly unwilling to report crimes or cooperate with investigations, even when they are survivors themselves. The consistent lack of clarity from the Executive about MPD's collaboration with DHS agencies – and whether MPD is sharing information with those agencies – is exacerbating this growing problem.

MPD's Collaboration with ICE Harms the Entire District

Notably, fear of federal immigration enforcement and, by extension, MPD, is broader than our noncitizen neighbors. Because officers from agencies like ICE and HSI detain and arrest people without making individualized determinations, U.S. citizens and those with lawful status who fit the “profile” of people targeted by immigration officers worry that they will be unlawfully detained on the way to work or to pick up their kids from school. At Legal Aid, we regularly meet clients and applicants for our services who are afraid to report to work, especially if they are in often-targeted industries like construction or hospitality.¹⁰ Several of our clients have reduced their working hours, missed shifts, or quit their employment entirely because they are terrified that they will encounter DHS on their way to work. This loss of income has ripple effects on entire families and communities relying on people who can no longer work at their full capacity, further destabilizing communities that contribute so much to the District's vibrancy.

Additionally, noncitizens, who make up about 16% of DC's workforce and 15% of our economic output, are a critical part of the District's economy. DHS's increased presence – and MPD's collaboration with their various officers – means that a significant portion of District residents are forced to weigh the risks and rewards of going to work, taking their children to school, attending doctor's appointments, or going to places of worship against the high likelihood that they will be stopped by MPD and subsequently arrested and detained by DHS officers. These warrantless arrests do not just scare undocumented immigrants; they create and fortify a culture of fear throughout entire communities, upending their financial, physical, and emotional health. In this way, the

¹⁰ MPD collaboration with ICE has turned traffic stops into a deportation pipeline, *The 51st News* (September 9, 2025) <https://51st.news/dc-police-work-with-ice-traffic-stop-deportation/>.

pattern and practice of warrantless arrests have a direct impact on all District residents' economic stability, which, in turn, directly impacts public safety – or a lack thereof.

Conclusion

MPD's cooperation with DHS agencies undermines public safety in the District, especially because District residents do not know how, and to what extent, MPD and DHS agencies are working together and sharing information. So long as MPD continues to facilitate federal immigration enforcement's unlawful operations in the District, MPD should be held accountable for the spiraling harms that DHS inflicts on some of DC's most vulnerable residents.

We call on the Council to 1) urge MPD to officially end any collaboration or joint operations with DHS and all its underlying agencies, and 2) demand an immediate and full accounting of all information sharing and related practices and activities which occurred during the collaboration. District residents, who make up our client community, deserve to understand exactly when and how MPD supported, facilitated, or cooperated with federal immigration enforcement agents targeting DC communities.

Written Testimony of Commissioner Howard Garrett, Jr.
Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, ANC 2G01
Before the Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety
Council of the District of Columbia
Public Roundtable on Federal–Local Law Enforcement Collaboration
Date: 12/2/2025

Good morning, Chairperson Pinto and members of the Committee.

My name is Howard Garrett Jr., and I serve as the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for ANC 2G01. I am writing today in my personal capacity as an elected representative who has heard directly from families, educators, and neighbors across the District about the growing fear, confusion, and instability created by joint operations between MPD and numerous federal law enforcement agencies.

While much of the public conversation has focused on immigration enforcement, the reality is broader and more concerning. What residents are experiencing today is a vast network of federal–local collaboration involving agencies such as ICE, HSI, ATF, DEA, IRS, U.S. Marshals, Park Police, and FBI, operating alongside MPD in ways that lack transparency and, in many cases, have violated community trust.

Over recent months, residents have reported multiple incidents where MPD and federal agents operated together or in close sequence:

- Near a Ward 5 school, families witnessed a traffic stop that ended with masked federal agents taking someone into custody moments after MPD officers released him.
- In a Ward 1 neighborhood, residents saw about a dozen masked federal agents staging during morning school hours, creating fear among parents simply trying to bring their children safely to class.
- In a Ward 7 corridor, neighbors observed masked agents stopping work trucks, questioning a group of men, and detaining several in full view of apartment buildings where families live.

These are not isolated concerns. These incidents have created an environment in which residents do not know who is policing their community or under what authority they are acting. This confusion has had serious, measurable consequences on public trust and safety.

Within the last couple of weeks, the District experienced four police-related deaths in four days, including an MPD shooting while on patrol with federal agents in a Ward 7 neighborhood. This expanding federal–local collaboration is no longer a theoretical policy concern; it has become a matter of life and death.

District law, including the Sanctuary Values Act and the Human Rights Act, is clear:

- MPD is prohibited from detaining individuals solely for immigration purposes.
- MPD cannot facilitate federal civil questioning without a judicial order.
- District agencies cannot assist federal civil immigration enforcement except under narrow conditions.

Yet the reality residents experience is drastically different — and it is clear that certain Executive Orders issued by the Mayor and MPD leadership have enabled practices that go far beyond what the law requires.

As local elected officials, it is our responsibility to protect the people who live here — all of them — regardless of immigration status, income, or neighborhood. When residents cannot distinguish between federal and local law enforcement, they stop reporting crimes, avoid schools and public spaces, and lose trust in the government meant to serve them.

I respectfully urge the Judiciary Committee to take the following actions:

1. Conduct complete oversight of federal–local collaboration

This includes all joint operations, not only those involving ICE. The Council must require MPD to disclose any agreements, directives, or communications enabling cooperation with federal agencies.

2. Request the repeal of Executive Orders that exceed legal requirements

- The Mayor’s Executive Order mandates collaboration with federal agencies, including U.S. Marshals, FBI, Park Police, DEA, ATF, Secret Service, and others.
- Chief Smith’s EO 25-005 permits information-sharing, transporting federal agents, and facilitating releases into federal custody. These directives undermine compliance with the Sanctuary Values Act and place residents at risk.

3. Fully enforce and strengthen the Sanctuary Values Act

The Act must be updated to include all federal agencies conducting immigration enforcement, not just ICE.

4. Make transparent all federal requests for assistance

MPD and other District agencies must publicly document all requests for information, support, or participation from federal agencies, and what action, if any, was taken.

5. Issue guidance for schools and MPD officers

DCPS must guide to protect students and families during drop-off and pick-up, including Know Your Rights materials. MPD officers must complete updated, mandatory training to ensure compliance with the Sanctuary Values Act.

6. Protect working families by reversing harmful FY26 budget decisions

The District must stop overspending on policing and incarceration and raise progressive revenue to support the communities most impacted by these enforcement practices.

Conclusion

Our residents are living with a level of fear and uncertainty that we have not seen in years. They deserve clarity, accountability, and a government that is transparent about who is operating in their neighborhoods and under what authority. If we do not confront these issues directly, the erosion of trust will only deepen, and the consequences will be lasting.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to public safety in the District of Columbia. I look forward to continued solutions to keep our residents safe.

Testimony of Cheryl Smelson, member of the Washington Interfaith Network

To the DC Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

12/04/2025

My name is Cheryl Smelson and I live in Ward 6 on Capitol Hill. I'm a member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church and the Washington Interfaith Network. I'm testifying today because I believe the council should fight against the federal invasion of our city and reassert its authority under home rule to responsibly protect public safety.

I believe President Trump was not acting in good faith when he claimed there was a "crime emergency" in DC and sent in the National Guard last August. In fact, prior to the federal invasion, DC was on track to have the lowest number of homicides in almost a decade, thanks to the cooperation between city officials and neighborhood organizations.

I believe the mayor was wrong to sign executive order 25-090, which established a joint task force between the MPD and federal agents and extended the deployment of the National Guard. I understand she is fearful that Republican members of Congress are threatening to overturn home rule. And I am fully aware that DC is not a state and lacks representation in Congress.

But as a moral matter, it is wrong for the city to collaborate with ICE as they violate due process through racial profiling, stopping and detaining workers, and terrorizing school children.

I live near Lincoln Park on Capitol Hill, which has two popular playgrounds for young children. My neighbors tell me their kids were afraid to play in the park this summer because the scary National Guard patrols were there with their long rifles.

I perceive the National Guard as a form of intimidation and a power flex by the president, not as a force for good to protect me from crime. A federal judge recently ruled that the ongoing deployment by the Trump administration is unlawful. Our church prayed for Sarah Beckstrom, the guard member who was killed last week, but I believe the guard should never have been in DC to begin with.

It is time for the mayor and the council to stop being afraid and to reassert our rights—limited as they may be—under home rule. It's time for the National Guard to go home and for MPD to stop cooperating with ICE. DC should reclaim its status as a sanctuary city that values all human beings. It's the right thing to do.

Testimony of Audrey MillerHallett
Public Hearing on Public Safety in DC
Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
December 4, 2025

Chairperson Pinto and members of the Committee, my name is Audrey MillerHallett. I have lived in the District for 20 years and currently reside in Ward 6. I am part of an organization that supports immigration rights through collective action within the faith community. With the surge in federal immigration law enforcement aimed at addressing what, per Presidential EO 14333, is “the city’s failure to maintain public order and safety,” our organization has seen a significant increase in demand for financial, legal, emotional, and spiritual support from immigrants. These requests have included temporary housing, paying rent because a working family member has been detained or deported, transportation due to fear of public transit, and therapy for children experiencing trauma. I, along with many others, have written letters to immigration court judges asking that individuals remain in the U.S. These experiences are exhausting and dangerous for the whole community. They are worsened by the expansion of local police into federal immigration enforcement under the federal government’s expedited removal policies.

I am submitting this written testimony to strongly oppose the unlawful support that DC MPD provides to federal immigration agencies and to inform the Council that the community needs its support to speak out against the unprecedented targeting of immigrants and blatant violations of their rights and freedoms, and to demand that it stop. For much of our nation’s history, we aspired to be a City on a Hill, serving as a moral and political model for others. The District of Columbia is not such a city today.

I begin my testimony with several requests. I ask the Council to hold the Mayor accountable for: 1) enforcing DC Code 24-211.07, “Prohibition on cooperation with federal immigration agencies,” including reporting actions by the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the Department of Corrections, the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, and the Department of Behavioral Health, whether they comply with or violate this law; 2) preventing MPD from sharing information with federal immigration authorities about individuals not in MPD custody, such as during traffic stops; 3) ensuring that no DC agencies facilitate the federal government in engaging in racial profiling; 4) stopping all DC agencies from providing transportation to federal immigration agency employees and detained individuals; 5) ensuring the DC Government educates sensitive locations in the District—like schools, hospitals, and churches—about their legal obligations when immigration enforcement agencies request access; and 6) considering funding assistance to mutual aid networks and immigration support groups responding to the growing need for support, especially as foundations and grantors withdraw backing out of fear of retaliation. I also request that the DC Council establish monthly reporting requirements to ensure these accountability measures are met. While it is harmful to community cooperation for any law enforcement personnel to wear masks and potentially provoke violent encounters, I recognize there is currently no legal way to ban their use at the federal level. Nonetheless, MPD officers, equipped with body cameras, could help restore a sense of safety by recording any federal agency mask use they observe during their duties.

Testimony of Audrey MillerHallett
Public Hearing on Public Safety in DC
Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
December 4, 2025

BACKGROUND

When the Crime Emergency Declaration in DC (EO 14333) was issued on August 11, 2025, the federal government determined that the need for intervention stemmed from uncontrollable crime and an urgent need to protect safety and security within DC's borders. The Justice Department, after a failed attempt to take over MPD authority, issued Order No. 6372-2025, revealing the main purpose of this declaration: **a)** that widespread crime would be addressed through assistance from MPD in enforcing federal immigration law (contrary to DC Code 24-211.07, "Prohibition on Cooperation with federal government immigration agencies"), **b)** helping to locate, apprehend, and detain individuals unlawfully present in the US, and **c)** allowing MPD to use DC's databases to inquire about individuals' immigration status and assist in enforcing civil immigration laws.

The Emergency Declaration ended after 30 days, but the immigration enforcement crackdown continues, even after the Mayor issued Order 2025-090 on September 2, 2025, establishing a Safe and Beautiful Emergency Operations Center (SBEOC) to coordinate with federal law enforcement agencies. While the Mayor's Order creating the SBEOC does not include participation by immigration enforcement agencies, let's be clear: the entire federal system has been mobilized to implement a radical immigration agenda. In cities across the country, like D.C., which had no prior crime surge caused by immigrants, both citizens and noncitizens are being apprehended, detained, and deported—even if they have no criminal record and without judicial warrants.

OPINION

Arguing that workstreams in the SBEOC exclude immigration support is wishful thinking, especially as we see firsthand in mainstream and social media posts that safety often involves agents masked in violation of DC laws, destroying private property during arrests, separating families, threatening the protection of sensitive locations, and exposing DC residents and businesses to more dangerous conditions than before the emergency.

How much lawlessness are we willing to accept from federal immigration enforcement? Why do we quickly abandon our values of human dignity, respect, and legal rights when it comes to immigration status? The Mayor has clarified that the Sanctuary City Values Act is a sacrificial lamb to preserve Home Rule. But haven't we learned from watching the ongoing federal attacks on social equity policies, from the gleeful firing of federal workers and contractors, from the firing of senior government officials because they are Black or female, from the sudden termination of humanitarian parole and revocation of work permits? Haven't we learned from the assault on the poor and marginalized in the OBBB Act that the unlawful abduction, detention,

Testimony of Audrey MillerHallett
Public Hearing on Public Safety in DC
Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
December 4, 2025

and deportation of immigrants and the consequences for our community are just the tip of the iceberg of the America First agenda? As city after city falls prey to forces of cruelty, greed, and tyranny, will we regret not acting on the early warning signs? In the District, let's stand firm on our values and be clear in our actions. I hope our current situation shows that trying to balance Sanctuary City and Home Rule is ultimately unsustainable. The debate over Home Rule will continue through repeated elections until DC becomes a state—perhaps the work of the next generation. Still, I will pray for relief today. And I ask the Council to implement my requests and move closer to being that City on a Hill. Thank you.



Written Testimony of Michael Murphy to the D.C. Council Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety: Public Safety in the District of Columbia (Dec. 4, 2025)

Chairperson Pinto and members of the Council, thank you for convenning this hearing to address the issue of “Public Safety in the District of Columbia.”

My name is Michael Murphy. I’m a 30-year resident of Ward 6.

On June 25, 2025, I published an op-ed in The Hill titled the [*DC government is faking crime data, systematically under-reporting violence*](#). This was the first public airing of the charge that MPD was using charges like “felony threats” as a stand-in for “assault w/ dangerous weapon” (ADW) to artificially lower the violent crime rate in the District. In short, while an ADW charge gets tallied as a “violent crime,” a “felony threat” charge does not. As I recognized then, and still recognize today, “[t]he causes of and solutions to crime are complicated. There is no single person or thing to blame. But if we are given falsified data about it, we will be unable to solve the problem. We cannot fix things if we are willfully blind to what is happening.”

The response to this revelation is currently being seen in the data MPD is reporting out on a daily basis. As demonstrated in the table below the year-to-date decreases have methodically stair-stepped down from 22% on July 8 to 10% as of December 1:

Date	ADW 2024 YTD	ADW 2025 YTD	ADW % Change
<u>7/8/25</u>	563	438	-22%
<u>8/6/25</u>	648	522	-19%
<u>9/1/25</u>	717	586	-18%
<u>10/3/25</u>	805	689	-14%
<u>11/8/25</u>	891	784	-12%
<u>11/17/25</u>	914	810	-11%
<u>11/26/25</u>	932	836	-10%
<u>12/1/25</u>	948	849	-10%

The only explanations for this unmistakable trend are:

1. The District has experienced an uptick in ADWs since July; or
2. The way MPD has been charging ADWs has materially changed since July (e.g., charging crimes involving weapons as ADW rather than felony threats, overcharging); or
3. Some combination of both.

And, mind you, these comparisons are to 2024 that is, at best, highly unreliable based on the allegations that have surfaced as to how alternate charges like “felony threats” and “reckless endangerment w/ firearm” have been overused to tamp down the ADW number.

Increased Public Scrutiny

While I received a mixed reaction from the public, I’m unaware of any government officials challenging my conclusion that this was happening frequently and across the City. This salvo led to increased public scrutiny of the issue:

- On August 11, Statistician Jeff Asher released a study entitled [*Assessing DC’s Violent Crime Trends, Murder is plunging in DC but what about overall violent crime?*](#)
- On August 18, Statistician Jeff Asher released a follow up entitled [*Evaluating Crime Reporting in Washington, DC.*](#)
- On August 29, The Washington Post Editorial Board published an op-ed entitled [*Crime was down before Trump took over, but maybe less than D.C. claimed.*](#)
- On September 18, the House Oversight Committee conducted a hearing which can be viewed in its entirety [here](#) and [here](#).
- On September 30, 2025, the Senate Judiciary Committee conducted a hearing billed as [*Blue City Chaos and Tragedy: How the Trump Administration is Addressing the Human Cost of Soft On Crime Policies.*](#) After the hearing, the Senate Judiciary Committee released the following statement: [*Judiciary Witnesses Expose Manipulated Crime Data, Anti-Victim Judges and Harmful Soft-on-Crime Policies in Democrat-Run Cities.*](#)
- On October 5, The Washington Post printed an article entitled [*As feds probe D.C. crime stats, some police eager to help build a case.*](#) This article centers around the use of “endangerment w/ a firearm” rather than ADW because, again, the former is not categorized as a violent crime, the same allegation I presented to you in my [*September 29*](#) letter.
- On October 6, Statistician Jeff Asher published his study [*Re-Evaluating Washington DC’s Crime Trends.*](#)

DC reports two sets of crime data

Where the issue gets particularly opaque is that DC reports out two sets of crime data to:

1. FBI National Incident-Based Reporting System ([NIBRS](#)); and
2. [DC Code Index Offense](#).

As stated in [MPD 2023 Annual Report](#), ADW is “[k]nowingly or purposely causing serious bodily injury to another person or threatening to do so. Weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, knives and other objects.” The FBI’s equivalent, “aggravated assault,” “[c]ounts ADWs and Aggravated Assaults regardless if a weapon is used or not.”

This small difference in definitions, however, leads to rather large differences in what gets reported.

The gap between ADW and Aggravated Assault

As Jeff Asher noted in his August 18 article entitled [Assessing DC’s Violent Crime Trends](#):

DC reported 1,026 aggravated assaults with a dangerous weapon in 2024 per MPDC’s website, but they reported 3,004 aggravated assaults to the FBI. The growing discrepancy between data reported to the FBI and the publicly available website can be seen in the below graph comparing aggravated assaults reported to the FBI to DC’s publicly available data rolling over 12 months.

DC reported a 7 percent increase in aggravated assaults in 2024 (which was offset in the violent crime count by large drops in robberies, rapes, and murder) but MPDC’s public data showed a 27 percent drop in assaults with a dangerous weapon. This contrasts sharply with 2020 when DC reported a 3.6 percent increase in assaults with a dangerous weapon compared to a 2.1 percent increase in aggravated assaults.

In sum, in 2024 the FBI and DC trends lines for ADW went in opposite directions. Despite this, all we heard and continue to hear is that violent crime is at a 30-year low. Even the [notice for this hearing](#) states “Last year, crime dropped to its lowest levels in more than three decades.”

But selectively citing data is unhelpful and has severely undermined the public’s trust - this is a major contributing factor leading to why the public’s perceptions and the data are grossly misaligned.

In 2025, there will be another significant gap between ADW and aggravated assault, but the publicly-available data that I’ve been able to review demonstrates that – consistent with the downward trend in the charging data discussed above – the gap measured on a percentage basis has also shrunk as the year has progressed:

Date	MCCA ¹	DC-MPD	# Diff	% Diff
3/31/2025	360	210 ²	-150	+71.43%
6/30/2025	762	418 ³	-344	+82.30%
9/30/2025	1,053	679 ⁴	-374	+55.08%

Thus, although there will still be a significant gap between ADW and aggravated assault in 2025, based on recent trends that gap will be far less pronounced than it was in 2024.

In 2024, compared to current downward trends, the year-to-date drops in ADW charges remained improbably consistent during the second half of the year:

Date	ADW 2023 YTD	ADW 2024 YTD	ADW % Change
7/18/24	797	581	-27%
8/1/24	856	622	-27%
9/1/24	975	713	-27%
10/1/24	1,096	798	-27%
11/6/2024	1,241	888	-28%
12/3/24	1,337	946	-29%
12/24/24	1,376	1,006	-27%

Such flat-line drops are a red flag the Council either should have questioned or chose to ignore.

On [August 7, 2024](#), The Washington Post reported:

To Tommy Wells, the former Ward 6 council member and Allen’s chief recall defender, the drop in crime underscored how “silly” the recall attempt has been. ***“We have not taken credit for the decrease in crime, because that’s as silly as taking credit for the increase in crime,”*** said Wells, who has repeatedly framed the recall as an antidemocratic attempt by MAGA extremists to overturn an election — infuriating the recall’s Democratic organizers.

¹ The Major Cities Chiefs Association ([MCCA](#)) is a professional organization of police executives representing the largest cities in the United States and Canada.

² This is an estimate from the Wayback Machine for [March 27](#) (205) and [April 8](#) (237).

³ This is an estimate from the Wayback Machine for [June 13](#) (378) and [July 8](#) (438).

⁴ This is from the Wayback Machine [September 30](#) (679).

Despite such conspicuously consistent drops of the use of ADW on a year-to-year basis, I'm not aware that the Council took any action to perform oversight and just unquestionably relied on and repeatedly cited these "historic drops" in violent crime.

But treating crime stats like quarterly corporate earnings reports is not helpful. On October 6, Statistician Jeff Asher published his study [Re-Evaluating Washington DC's Crime Trends](#) he took exception as to how the federal surge data was being reported and plainly cautioned against an over reliance on year-to-date stats. Specifically, he noted:

I think that using Year-to-Date statistics can be useful, especially if you're aggregating trends from a large sample of agencies or it's late enough in the year and you're comparing 9 or 10 months of this year to 9 or 10 months in past years. For a good read on the issue with relying on YTD at an agency-level I always recommend Jerry Ratcliffe's terrific piece entitled "Year-to-date comparisons and why we should stop doing them" which lives up to its title.

A recent study from the [DC Justice Lab](#) estimated the direct costs of gun violence are "in the neighborhood of \$2 billion every year." See ABC7, [Each murder in Washington, DC costs taxpayers \\$1.5 million](#); Peace for DC, [The Cost of Gun Violence](#). This reportedly does not include the costs and tragedy visited upon the families of the victims. A 2021 [study](#) from the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform released in 2020 estimated that "[e]very homicide costs taxpayers \$1.5 million. Each individual homicide. And every non-fatal shooting when someone is hit but not killed just costs under \$800,000 per individual shooting."

MPD is experiencing historic levels of understaffing

To be clear, I believe crime is dropping and MPD – despite being [historically understaffed](#) – has things moving generally in the right direction. But if you want the [broader public on board](#) there needs to be radical transparency and the Council needs to be able to deliver honest assessments of where we are – both good and bad – and commit to providing complete and honest data.

This shrinking of the MPD was by design. In June 2020, for example, Councilmember Allen expressly noted that officers "[will start to drop by about 200 officers \(we're at 3,700-3,800 now\)](#)" and that the Council's "[strategy is to reduce our force size.](#)" Five years later, MPD is persistently understaffed with fewer than 3,200 sworn personnel.

As previously noted, the reported number of sworn personnel is inflated because it also includes officers who are (1) detailed to specialized units; (2) on sick leave, parental, or disability leave; or (3) under internal investigation. Thus, although the current number of sworn personnel is significantly lower than what is known to the public. As a result, MPD officers reportedly worked [1.5 million hours of overtime](#) last year. And we are now left, unfortunately, to rebuild MPD's staffing levels amidst a [nationwide shortage of police officers](#).

These issues are being investigated in earnest – and on a bi-partisan basis – in both the Senate Judiciary Committee and the House Oversight Committee. And it's evident that these reporting issues are being used as a lever to undermine home rule. The only way to push back on

these actions is through an independent analysis and a push for accountability to the extent it is warranted.

Trumpeting bumper sticker slogans about crime being at a “historic lows” and sloganeering that “one crime is too many” are unhelpful as the issue is far more nuanced. For example, as of December 1, 2025, the District has suffered 124 homicides (and on track to experience roughly 135 by year’s end). While this is fewer than 2024 (187) and far fewer than 2023 (274), since 2010 we’ve had seven years with the same or fewer number of murders.⁵ Thus, murder is nowhere near a 30-year low.

Other aspects of violent crime are down, but we continue to lose sight of just how bad things were in 2023. I moved to DC in June 1993 and to Capitol Hill in 1994 and proudly raised my family here. Thankfully, we are not experiencing more than 400 murders per year like we were in the 1990s. But our per capita murder rate is still quite high and it remains a persistent problem. According to an [NPR analysis of FBI data](#), “the city’s homicide rate in 2024 was roughly around 25 per 100,000 residents — nearly twice the rate in 2012, when it was 13.9 per 100,000 residents.”

We need to start talking honestly about the scope of the problem and reaching across the ideological spectrum for real solutions to these issues. This means soliciting feedback and proposed solutions from all impacted constituencies without ever losing sight that there are victims associated with each of these incidents.

Questions that DC Council oversight should answer for the public

1. **The 2,000-Case Gap:** In 2024, the District reported 3,004 “Aggravated Assaults” to the FBI but only 1,026 “Assaults with a Dangerous Weapon” on the MPD public website. Can MPD provide a specific breakdown explaining this delta of nearly 2,000 incidents?
2. **Opposing Trend Lines:** Why did the trend lines for FBI data (showing a 7% increase in aggravated assaults) and MPD public data (showing a 27% decrease in ADW) move in completely opposite directions in 2024?
3. **Two Data Streams:** Given MPD reports two separate streams of crime data, why does it choose to not make the FBI’s NIBRS data more accessible? Is MPD keeping pace with the recent changes to NIBRS with respect to non-fatal shootings?
4. **2025 Trends:** Current data indicates the gap between FBI reporting and MPD public reporting persists in 2025. Will the Council commit to an independent audit to reconcile these two datasets for the current fiscal year?
5. **Felony Threats vs. ADW:** Has there been a policy directive, formal or informal, instructing officers or supervisors to classify incidents as “Felony Threats” rather

⁵ The following breaks down year and number of homicides: 2010 (132), 2011 (108), 2012 (88), 2013 (104), 2014 (105), 2016 (135), and 2017 (116).

than "Assault with a Dangerous Weapon" when no physical injury occurs, even if a weapon was brandished?

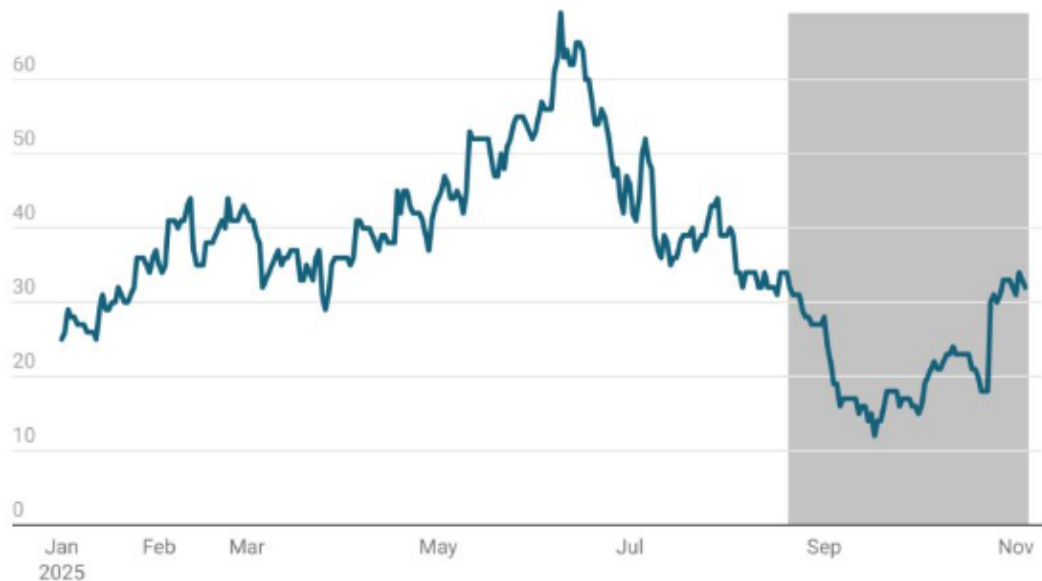
6. **Endangerment with a Firearm:** Is MPD charging “Endangerment with a Firearm” for “non-contact shootings” (incidents where shots are fired at a person but miss)? If so, why are these attempted assaults not classified as ADW or Attempted Murder for statistical purposes?
7. **Downgrading Charges:** How many times in 2024 and 2025 did a responding officer recommend an ADW charge, only to have it changed to “Felony Threats,” “Endangerment with a Firearm,” or “Property Damage” by a supervisor or watch commander?
8. **Shooting Victims:** What factors impacted the drop in shooting victims realized in DC during August and September and the increase in October, as detailed in this [November 7 chart posted on Jeff Asher’s LinkedIn page](#):



Jeff Asher • 1st
Co-Founder at AH Datalytics, LLC
1d •

The drop in gun violence in DC following the Federal deployment starting in mid-August has more or less completely subsided.

Washington, DC Shooting Victims Rolling Over 30 Days



Source: Gun Violence Archive • Created with Datawrapper

9. **True Patrol Numbers:** The reported number of 3,064 sworn personnel includes those in specialized units and those under investigation or on leave. What is the actual number of officers available for full-duty patrol on any given day?
10. **Impact on Reporting:** Does the severe staffing shortage and the high volume of overtime (1.5 million hours) pressure officers to utilize “lesser” charges (like simple assault or threats) to reduce the administrative time required to “paper” a serious violent crime?
11. **Strategic Reduction:** In 2020, Councilmembers discussed a strategy to reduce the force size. Given the current attrition rate outpacing recruitment, does the Council have a specific target number for sworn officers required to maintain public safety, and how does the current number align with that target?
12. **Status of Federal Probes:** What is the current status of the Council's cooperation with the ongoing inquiries by the Department of Justice and the House Oversight Committee regarding crime data manipulation?
13. **Auditor Referral:** Why has the Council not yet made a formal referral to the Office of the DC Auditor to investigate the specific allegations of data manipulation between ADW and Felony Threats, despite the issue being public since June 2025?

At the end of the day, the Council’s job is to ask the hard questions and seek out answers whether or not they are things that support or undermine any prior belief.

Thank you for the time and the opportunity to present on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Michael L. Murphy

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Treasurer Logan Shomo

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MPD Staffing Levels 2017-Present

Date	Sworn Total (Excl. Recruits)	Sworn Total (Incl. Recruits)	Recruits
<u>December 2017</u>	3,706	3,834	128
<u>December 2018</u>	3,691	3,851	160
<u>December 2019</u>	3,641	3,806	165
<u>December 2020</u>	3,624	3,743	119
<u>December 2021</u>	3,448	3,551	103
<u>December 2022</u>	3,305	3,408	103
<u>December 2023</u>	3,209	3,332	123
<u>December 2024</u>	3,157	3,266	109
<u>November 2025</u>	3,064	3,188	124